(b) whether Government propose to establish separate universities where there is no Central University and enable the local Adivasis and other students who are not in a position to go outside; and

(c) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) There is one Central University *viz.* Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya in Maharashtra. There is no Central University in Karnataka.

(b) and (c) The National Policy on Education, 1986 (as modified in 1992) lays emphasis on the consolidation and expansion of facilities in the existing Universities rather than setting up of more Universities. In view of this, no Central University is proposed to be set up in the State of Maharashtra and Karnataka or elsewhere in the country. State Governments however can set up their own Universities by enacting legislation for meeting their specific requirements.

Scientists' protest regarding Vedic Astrology

702. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Ministry has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in "Hindu"of 2nd May, under the caption "Scientists" protest move on vedic Astrology"; and

(b) if so, the response of the Ministry to the letter written by the Scientists to IUGCV against opening such department?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) The University Grants Commission (UGC) has recently decided to introduce a number of Vocational, Innovative and General courses. Jyvotir Vigyan is one of such subjects where courses have been introduced in select universities leading to BA/BA (Hons.)/M.A./Ph.D degrees. The UGC, as the custodian of higher education in the country, has endorsed the pursuit of such courses in the spirit of free inquiry into all aspects of knowledge in the holistic sense of the term.